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Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Ragamalikas

By

Prof. K. R. RAJAGOPALAN

Among the Trinity of Karnataka music only Dikshitar has composed ragamalika-s. Perhaps he inherited this trait from his father Ramaswamy Dikshitar, whose chief interest lay, perhaps in composing ragamalika-s! On the Lord of Tirupathi, Ramaswamy Dikshitar sang a song "Manasa Venetarula" in fortyeight raga-s; on the Goddess Meenakshi, he sang another in 40 ragas; his magnum opus could be said to be the piece "Natakadi Vidyala" in a raga-tala-malika of 108 ragas! It is a pity we have details only upto the sixty-first raga. In this last composition both the names of the raga and tala have been deftly woven into.

All these compositions are in Telugu. Ramaswamy Dikshitar is also well-known for having created the raga Hamsadhwani - in which Muthuswamy Dikshitar has composed the immortal and widely sung song "Vatapiganapatim" on Ganapathi shrine in the Tiruvarur temple complex. Continuing in the same tradition, Subbarama Dikshitar, the adopted son of Baluswamy (younger brother of Muthuswamy Dikshitar) has composed eight long and short ragamalikas; one in as few as four ragas ("Valapu miri todi" (Telugu) on Rama) [and one in all the seventy-two melakarta ragas ("Eh Kana-kambari" - Telugu text by his teacher Krishna Kavi and music by Subbarama Dikshitar himself).

But Muthuswamy Dikshitar, even though he has sung more than four hundred and fifty songs, has composed only

four ragamalika-s but each of them is a gem in itself - both for the setting and the special features it contains.

Many Sources

We have two main sources for these compositions of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. The first is Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini (SSP for short) and the second the series Dikshita Kirtanamala (DK for short). The former is definitely more authentic as it was published by Subbarama Dikshitar in 1904 (MD died in 1835); one cannot be so certain of the second which was published by two brothers who were lineal descendants of the Dikshitar family and lived in Madras. The former contains 229 and the latter contains 426 Kritis. Out of the four ragamalika-s the first two alone are found in SSP, but all four are found in DK. We shall study each of them in some detail.

(1) Sri Viswanatham :-

Viswanatha is Lord of all the fourteen worlds and appropriately this ragamalika is set in fourteen different raga-s. The pallavi is in two raga-s, the anupallavi in four raga-s ($2 \times 2 = 4$) and the charana is in eight raga-s ($2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$)!

Dikshitar called this Chaturdasa-bhuvana-rupa-ragamalika. There is a village called Kulikkarai close to Tiruvarur and Dikshitar went to that place at the invitation of the Mirasdar Vaidyalingam. We know that none of the trinity would

sing the praise of men and true to that tradition, Dikshitar merely mentions that Vaidyalingam was in charge of maintenance of that temple.

Special Features

There are swara-sahitya-s at the end of every raga passage and the name of every raga is woven into the text, sometimes adroitly also. This is a hallmark of the genius of Dikshitar. Pallavi is set in Sri and Arabi raga-s and the anupallavi contains Gowri, Nata, Gaula and Mohana raga-s. After the last Mohana raga, there are swara-sahitya in the previous six raga-s in the reverse (viloma) order. The raga-s that make up the charana are, in order, Sama, Lalita, Bhairava, Saranga, Sankarabarana, Kamboji, Devakriya, and Bhoopala. Here too, there are swara-sahityas of half-an-avarta in each raga in the reverse order, again the anupallavi piece should be sung, thus going back to Sri raga once again. It is worthy of note that the first raga is Sri (deroting mangalam) which is one of the well-known ancient ghana raga-s; and the last, appositely, is in the raga Bhoopala-Viswanatha is the Bhoopala referred to!

This ragamalika is set to Adi tala.

II. *Poornachandra bimba vadana:*

Set in six raga-s and in roopaka tala, this piece is an offering to the Devi Kamalamba, one of the two consorts of Lord Thyagaraja of Tiruvarur. All the six raga-s are the janya raga-s from the twenty-eighth mela Sankarabharana. The names are all female-sounding! Poornachandrika, Narayani, Sarasvathi Manohari, Suddha Vasanta, Hamsadhwani and Nagadhwani. In the version given in DK series alone,

there are chitta-swara-s at the end of each raga. The names of the raga-s form part of the text. Towards the end of the song, there is a *Gopucchayati* (rhyme in the form of a cow's tail) lessening in thickness!—"Nagadhwani sahite. dhwanisahite, sahite, hite, tel!"

III. *Simhasana sthite:*

This is in praise of Lalitamba, the supreme mother goddess of Sri Vidya. All the four raga-s used are those in which the mangalam is usually sung - Saurashtra, Vasanta, Surati and Madhyamavati. All the four stanzas are in two lines each and at the end of each raga, there is a chittaswara of four avartana-s. Lalitamba is worshipped by Brahma, Agastya and many Bhagavatottama-s and poets, she resides resplendently on a throne. She is also daily worshipped by Parasurama and Hayagriva! (This reference is rather strange as it is not usually found in the list of deities offering obeisance to Lalita. Both are manifestations of Vishnu). The tala here is also roopaka. The names of the raga-s do not form part of the text. The word "mangala" is repeated a number of times in the song".

IV. *Madhavomampatu:*

This has been published for the first time in the Journal of the Music Academy, Madras in its Vol. 36 (on pages 186-207). This has not been included in the 14 Volume DK series. It is in praise of Lord Vishnu who took ten different avatar-s for the sake of vanquishing the wicked and protecting the just. The first five ragas are in the ghana raga-s viz, Nata,

Gaula, Sri, Arabi, and Varali; the last four are in the mangala raga-s viz. Vasantha, Surathi, Saurashtra and Madhyamavathi. The raga Kedara - a rakti raga is the connecting link as it were!

Many have been the poets and musicians who have sung about these avatara-s. The Kashmirian poet Kshemendra of the eleventh century is the earliest to list the ten (In earlier literature, the number of avatara-s have not been always ten). The great Vaishnavaita polymath Venkatanatha (more commonly known as Vedantha Desika) of the thirteenth century has sung an exquisite dasavatara sloka in the grandiose Sardulavikreedita meter of 19 akshara-s. According to him, Lord Ranga-

natha of Srirangam, took these ten avatara-s. There is a temple for the Dasavatara-s in Srirangam, in which all the ten incarnations are set in a single line in the sanctum sanctorum. The Azhagiya Singar who is completing the tallest gopuram just now, lives close to [this temple]. The famous Jayadeva Kavi mentions that Lord Krishna took the ten avatara-s and includes Buddha in his list. It is customary for South Indian poets to exclude Buddha and include Balarama as one of the avatara-s. The only exception to this is the Dasavatara stotra of Madhavacharya who includes Buddha. Mention could also be made of the ragamalika of Swathi Tirunal Maharaja, beginning with the words "Kamalajasya".

—o—

Pandit V. N. Bhatkhande

By

Sakuntala Narasimhan

September 19, 1986 will mark the fiftieth death anniversary of Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande. Among those who set up land-marks in the evolution of Hindustani music in the last two hundred years, this scholar-musician takes pride of place. It is rarely that performing artistes confess to a sense of indebtedness to a theorist in the field—and this is as true of music as of other arts; and Bhatkhande is perhaps one of the very few exceptions to this.

A Great Pioneer

Musicians and musicologists of the north, whatever their personal musical

inclinations and regardless of the school or *gharana* they swear allegiance to, have recorded their gratitude to this pioneer who brought order to a field where there was none before, and replaced obscurantism with a zeal for popularising classical music that ensured a niche for him in the annals of a glorious heritage. To him goes the credit almost entirely for the resurgence, preservation and systematisation of Hindustani music in the twentieth century.

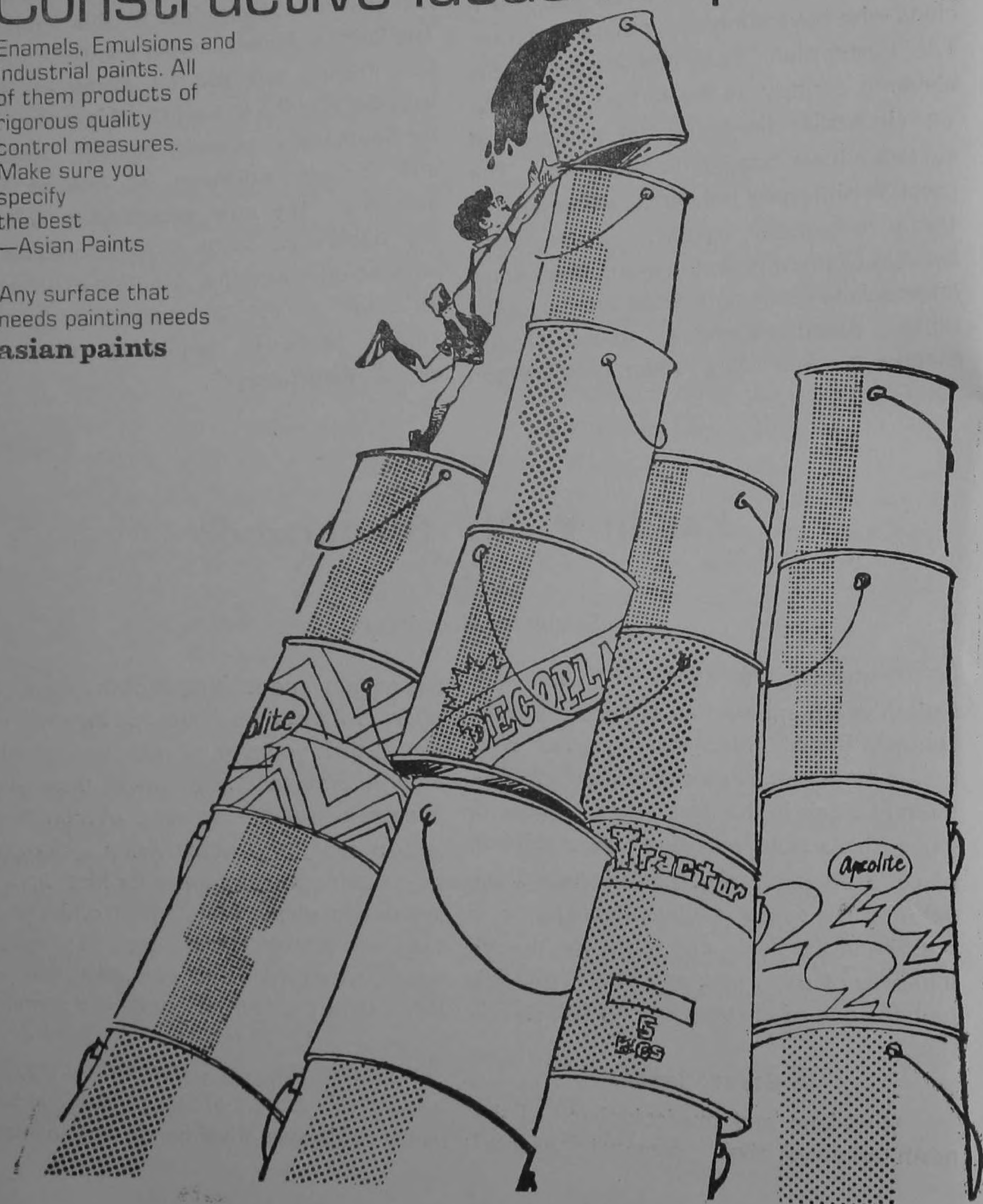
Born in 1860 on Janmashtami day in August, this second of five children in the family of Narayan Bhatkhande was named

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Vishnu but called affectionately Gajanan. Growing up in a middle class household with an atmosphere of religious devotion—and that meant as in any Hindu family, devotional music—it was inevitable that he should develop, even as a child, a keen ear for melody; but in an ethos that considered music as a dominant preoccupation only for a class of professional performers who were not considered 'respectable' or socially acceptable, his musical inclinations remained, predictably, confined to joining in the devotional recitations at home.

Musical Impulses

Like all boys of his age, he went to a Marathi school and later to Elphinstone high school and college. He had learnt to play the flute as a schoolboy but after hearing a sitar recital in the neighbourhood he decided to learn to play the instrument. And this he had perforce to do on the sly, going to the teacher's home at night to ensure that no one objected to this new interest of his or thwarted him in his pursuit of the muse. It is said that, once, when he agreed to play for a small gathering at a friend's house, his father too turned up as one of the invitees quite unaware of the fact that the artiste of the evening was his own son. The young Bhatkhande, likewise, had no idea that his father would be in the audience. The father, the story goes, was however pleased with the boy's competence and the family decided not to object to the continuance of his training, provided that it did not encroach upon his time and attention meant for academic studies.

The Dichotomy

Vishnu Narayan trained himself in dhrupad and khayal singing too and fea-

ted himself on the music of the stalwarts of the day; and while he did that he also realised that most of the performing musicians, although indisputably great performers, were not conversant with the grammar behind performed music. This chasm between theory and practice bothered him: surely, this could not be right?

He finished his B.A. and went on to graduate in law and set up practice as a lawyer. When, within a short span, he lost both his wife and only daughter, it seemed the natural thing to do to turn to music full time for solace; and giving up his profession in law, he immersed himself wholly into what was to become the ultimate passion of his life. He began to travel widely—to Madras, Bengal, Gujarat or wherever he felt drawn by the presence of a musician or scholar from whom he could derive some musical sustenance, or wherever some library or personal collection of manuscripts promised food for the hunger for musical knowledge that he had; and whatever came his way, he imbibed with a voraciousness that marks the true searcher and sets him apart from the run-of-the-mill inquirer.

Among those he met thus was Subbarama Dikshitar at Ettayyapuram, and perhaps this scholar's work, the "Sangeeta Sampradaya pradarshini," intensified Bhatkhande's keenness to codify and record all the available repertoires in north Indian music.

Role of Durbar Gharanas

This was the time when, under the protection of royal patronage and muni-

ficence, a small coterie of eminent musicians who were the custodians of the art of the time nurtured a monopoly that denied access to those interested in widening their repertoires: and yet, indefatigable that he was, Bhatkhande managed to gather compositions from every musician he came in contact with, at times carrying his zeal to a pitch that even invited a sneer of contempt from those of the old guard who took pride in 'guarding' their stock of compositions and refusing to part with what had been handed down to them as part of an exclusive heritage from their teachers.

Rampur was an exception—from the galaxy of celebrity artistes that the music loving Nawab of this state nurtured in his court, Bhatkhande obtained many a rare khayal to add to his collection. With the encouragement of another Ruler—that of Baroda state—he organised the first ever All India conference of musicians and musicologists. The music school that he set up here became subsequently the seed from which the idea of the now famous M.S. University developed.

Gwalior Institute

The Maharaja of Gwalior—another centre for music that boasts of the oldest gharana in Hindustani music—invited him to set up a similar institution for training in music in 1918. The idea of setting up a premier institute for advanced training in classical music sprouted from the success of those initial endeavours and finally, in 1926, the Marris College of Music came into existence in Lucknow. It is now named after Bhatkhande and has had on its staff some of the most eminent performers of the north in recent years.

Notation Evolved

If these efforts at institutionalising music were a major contribution and a landmark in the history of Hindustani music no less important was the contribution he made to theory by developing a standard notation for preserving compositions and bringing out a series of authoritative books that are still unsurpassed as reference manuals for students of music and practitioners alike. Besides the thousand-odd

khayals, dhrupads and taranas that he thus recorded and preserved for posterity, he also composed a number of *lakshana gitas* codifying the grammar of each raga into lyrics set to tunes that contain the essential elements of each raga in capsule form.

Prodigious Output

He published a number of books in Marathi, Sanskrit and English, under the pen name of "Chatur Pandit" or "Vishnu Sharma"—the *Sangeeta Sudhakara*, *Sangeeta Kalpadrumankur*, *Raga Chandrika* the now famous Hindustani *Sangeet Pad-dhati* and the equally famous *Kramik Pustak Malika*. Where previously one had to depend only on oral tradition for compositions to be passed on from teacher to disciple, the publication of these books revolutionised the access that music lovers and students had to enrich their repertoires and to preserve what they already possessed. And where, previously, no particular theory of raga classification was accepted unanimously as authoritative, Bhatkhande drew up a set of 10 'thaats' (scales with seven notes, approximating to the melakarta scales of Venkatamakhi's scheme in the Carnatic tradition) under which all existing

ragas could be grouped. Each of these 'thaats' he named after the most widely known raga in the group and this classification has come to be accepted by modern theorists and practitioners alike.

That one person could, singlehandedly and in the face of social, intellectual and professional prejudice accomplish so much and contribute so significantly to an art form that had for centuries remained ortho-

doxy-ridden and parochial, is a tribute to the pioneering zeal of the man. And today there is not a music school or college that does not take pride in associating its activities or naming its annual festivities after this savant who died fifty years ago on Ganesha Chaturthi day. As one observer has put it, "if the renaissance of classical music in the north is due to one man more than to any other, it is due to Bhatkhande."



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A Spectrum of Perspectives on Sri Tyagaraja

By

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PART FOUR

S. Y. KRISHNASWAMY : TYĀGARĀJA AS THE LAST OF A LONG LINE OF SPIRITUAL GENIUSES.

S. Y. Krishnaswamy is an economist who has held high positions in the government of India, and he is a musicologist who founded a music *Sabhā* and has nurtured the arts of South India. He is the author of economic studies, fiction, and musicological books and articles⁴⁵.

In his book, *Thyagaraja, Saint and Singer*⁴⁶ S. Y. Krishnaswamy characterized Tyāgarāja as one of the three great South Indian composers of his time who used music to express spiritual experiences. Tyāgarāja's inner life is reflected in his songs, the lyrics of which also reveal that he was harrassed and misunderstood. In S. Y. Krishnaswamy's view, Tyāgarāja is one whose life is instructive; the saint was a 'nādayogi' (one who practices the discipline of using sound as a spiritual vehicle) but also a 'karma sannyāsi' (one who dedicates his actions, renouncing their fruits). Because Tyāgarāja achieved distinction in two interrelated fields of endeavour, S. Y. Krishnaswamy finds it difficult to assess his eminence in either field separately, but he concludes that for Tyāgarāja ultimately,

"music played a subordinate part" and devotion played the dominating role. Yet S. Y. Krishnaswamy reminds us that posterity remembers Tyāgarāja primarily for his music; while there have been numerous saints with mystical experiences and intensity of devotion equal to that of Tyāgarāja his unique greatness in the field of music is "unsurpassed."

S. Y. Krishnaswamy sees Tyāgarāja as the last great saint which South India has produced in its long tradition of musician-saints. His musical thoughts arose simultaneously with his religious feelings. Despite this co-origination, so great was his musical genius, that the world may be pardoned for considering him first as a musician and then as a saint.

S. Y. Krishnaswamy raised the question: Was Tyāgarāja a *jīvan mukta* (one liberated while yet alive)? And found it difficult to answer. Tyāgarāja was not a strict and traditional follower of the school of thought which has as its goal the release of the soul while it is still joined to a body. He seemed to have been blessed by the gift of music, and to have been involved in a path which valued devotional experience rather than philosophical system.

Tyāgarāja was an “unequalled master in investing his songs with musical rhythm and giving them the quality of movement”⁴⁸ Indeed, he gave life to his works through his musical genius. But in S. Y. Krishnaswamy’s view, Tyāgarāja considered himself to be a *bhakta* rather than a musician; he was using music as a vehicle to express his devotion; the core of his life and work was religious and not artistic.

He believes that before Tyāgarāja’s time musicians did not have the high status which Tyāgarāja’s personal life, and the songs which flowed from it—his experiences and the way he shaped them into musical forms—set him apart from others.

There has been a long tradition of court music in India, but even some of that was religiously coloured. “One may say boldly that it was only in the 18th century when the South Indian musical “trinity”—Tyāgarāja, Śyāma Śāstri, and Muthusvāmī Dikṣitar—emerged, that music won back its lost dignity and religious fervour.” Further because so much depends upon the *guru śiṣya parampara* (the teacher—disciple succession), which was not very strong among court musicians, but which tenaciously bonded Tyāgarāja and his disciples, much of the court tradition had died out, while Tyāgarāja’s songs, intimately personal in their religiosity, are thriving.

S.Y. Krishnaswamy gives Tyāgarāja credit for “having started a home for musical orphans” (i.e., unique melodies) and for having “brought up many *rāgas* which have since attained a stature; and in so doing, [he has] given them a local

habitation besides a name. By this achievement he has shown that the ability to comprehend and envisage the melodic potential of an unknown scale is perhaps the most difficult of all musical excellences.” For S.Y. Krishnaswamy, Tyāgarāja was the unique visionary who shone in this capacity.⁴⁹

THREE RECENT SCHOLARS’ VIEWS: SAMBAMOORTHY, RAGHAVAN, AND SUBBA RAO.

PROF. P. SAMBAMOORTHY TYAGARAJA AS NATIONAL COMPOSER, MULTIFACETED TEACHER.

P. Sambamoorthy, one of the great scholars of Kārṇāṭaka music, and a pioneer in the field of Tyāgarāja studies, gathered together many of his writings on Tyāgarāja in a book entitled *Great Composers: Book II, Tyagaraja*.⁵⁰ There he writes that “Tyagaraja, the poet, saint and composer is the greatest name in the history of South Indian Music. He is one of those minstrels of God, who come into this world to contribute to human happiness and uplift. A composer of his stature comes in the life-history of a nation, once in...five hundred years⁵¹”.

Sambamoorthy further describes Tyāgarāja as a *sahajavāggeyakāra* (a natural born composer) and as “the Prince amongst composers,” with a status in Indian music similar to that of Beethoven in western music. He also sees Tyāgarāja as an explorer who “reached Himalayan heights in the realm of pure melody,” and unraveled numerous mysteries of music, creating

the most soulful music India has yet heard. Thus, accomplishing the divinization of music, Tyāgarāja was “the greatest gift of God to humanity,” who was able to kindle “in the hearts of people a passionate desire for art music” of the highest sort. Elevating people’s lives and bringing solace to mankind. Tyāgarāja “transcended all limitations of race, language and country.” As one of the “noble galaxy of God’s chosen men”—the great *bhaktas* of India, Tyāgarāja lived up to high ideals, renouncing wealth and honor, and was an exemplar of the “life of service and contentment.” His bequest to humanity at large was “a tonal treasure” which is timeless, as well as a treasury of musicological wisdom and sage utterances.”⁵²

Sambamoorthy characterizes Tyāgarāja by means of numerous epithets, calling him “the Melodic Emperor,” “the greatest and most prolific composer of our times,” “the greatest tone-poet of our times,” “a daring genius,” and “a great *Vainika*” (*vīṇā* player). He also depicts the saint as a *punya purusa* (a person who has accumulated good merit in past lives). Tyāgarāja is also “a great teacher of mankind,” who embeds the gist of ethics deeply into his songs, a wise man who is humble, simple and accessible to all, a *jñāna yogi* (one disciplined in spiritual knowledge) who “shines like a Pole-star.” He is a great “National Composer” of India, that is, one who reflects the genius of his country’s music, thereby providing [a representative example of Indian musical patterns. He is a scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu, and a bridger of the gulf between “the swollen-headed *sangīta vidvān*

(scholar of music) and the *Bhāgavatar* who was the leader of Bhajans.”⁵³

An inspired composer, Tyāgarāja was “the Pioneer Architect of *sangatis* [variations on the refrain], and the *cūdāmani* [crest jewel] among composers,” being, in Sambamoorthy’s view, “as great as any of the sages who preceded him.” He was also a poet of nature, and the only composer to write songs in praise of Nārada. Tyāgarāja was a man who “always had a vision of the future” and he appreciated the new ideas which brought healthy developments to music. As a composer with vision, he was able to see into the future and lay “the foundations for the further development of South Indian music along correct lines.” He was a *sangīta smṛitikāra* (great authority on music) and “almost the first to glorify *sangīta sastrajñāna* i.e. knowledge pertaining to the science of music,” and he emphasized the pleasant path of song as possible way to God.⁵⁴

Tyāgarāja was an *Unnachavritti bhāgavatar*, a religious teacher who begged for all his necessities, from salt to camphor. He had reputation for sternness, righteous anger and staunchness, and so is seen as an authority figure. He was a *Rāmāyana vāggeyakāra* (composer of words and music on themes from the story of Rāma) whose “compositions have made Talugu a most lovable, fascinating and attractive language.”⁵⁵

Sambamoorthy also sees Tyāgarāja as a linguist who knew six languages, a *nāḍopāsaka* (devotee of divine sound)

who heard the *mūladhara nāda* (divine sound at the root of the universe). He believes that Tyāgarāja's school was popular because of Tyāgarāja's accessibility, his gifts as a teacher and musician, and his adherence to the ideals of "plain living, high thinking and service to humanity." He considers Tyāgarāja to be "one of the world's immortals," as well as a great scholar and a "high-souled *bhakta*." Characteristically, Sambamoorthy notes that Tyāgarāja is known by the title "Bhuloka Nārada" – "Nārada [the legendary sage] on earth." but he fails to say who gave the saint this title.⁵⁶

DR. V. RAGHAVAN : TYAGARAJA AS PRESERVER OF INDIAN MUSIC, REFORMER, AND "SPIRITUAL ENGINEER."

V. Raghavan, one of the greatest Sanskritists of the century,⁵⁷ considers Tyāgarāja both as a devotee and as an artist, finding "the combination of Vedānta, devotion and literary treatment in his songs" to be reminiscent of the literary treatment of *bhakti* and philosophy in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and the religio-aesthetic approach found in the works of Bopadeva and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. He sees Purandaradāsa dominating one end of the Vijayanagar period and Tyāgarāja dominating the other. He also notes the trend symbolized in the idea of the gradual decline of religious culture *yugā* by *yuga* (age by age): as decline deepens, *bhakti* becomes the most practicable religious discipline, and music perforce becomes compact. From the leisurely unfolding of *rāgas* for hours

and days in an earlier era, modern necessity condenses the "musical vitamin tablet of *kṛitī*", thereby preserving the music in essence. Raghavan believes that Tyāgarāja is the greatest composer involved in this process of miniaturization.⁵⁸

Tyāgarāja was "probably the greatest of all the great musical artists working in this period in South India," and a great debt is owed to him for his work in helping "the country keep its music." "His powerful genius comprehended the several and varied excellences" of the many earlier masters of music who preceded him. Tyāgarāja's output was prolific, like that of Purandaradāsa and Kshetrajna; his devotion was intense, like that of Purandaradāsa; many of his songs are cries of anguish, like the songs of Bhadrācalam Rāmadās; and he could match his contemporaries as well as work in forms made famous by predecessors like Nārāyana Tirtha and Jayadeva. The spectrum of moods which he was able to communicate in a variety of song types show "manifold architectonic experimentation, design and skill." His songs contain both poetic excellence and spiritual value. And form "an endless epic record of the mind of a great *bhakta* which was, till the end, erupting like a ceaseless volcano."⁵⁹

Though some songs are in the mood of meekness and pleading, many others exhibit a bold spirit, full of confidence and faith. They show a fecund imagination, and an appreciation of humor and folk wisdom. They also reveal that Tyāgarāja was well-versed in Sanskrit.

"Among the music composers of his time, Tyāgarāja was a poet, preacher and philosopher." He was a disciple of the *nāma siddhānta* path (the cult of the Lord's name), and a reformer who was influenced by the songs of Purandaradāsa, which are critical of hypocrisy and empty ritual.⁶⁰

An ecstatic devotee who enjoyed decorating the image of his Lord Rāma, Tyāgarāja was aware that "all is Vasudeva," and he was "a true *Mahātma*... a rare *Mahātma*" in Raghavan's estimation. In language somewhat different from what Śrīmatī Savithri Rajan used, V. Raghavan emphasizes the role of Tyāgarāja as a member of the corps of "spiritual engineers" who bring the Himalayan waters of the Upanisads down to irrigate the hearts of the masses.⁶¹

T. V. SUBBA RAO : TYAGARAJA, AUTHOR OF REVOLUTIONARY PROGRESS.

T.V. Subba Rao, the respected musicologist who served for several years as the president of the Music Academy of Madras, has expressed several noteworthy views of Tyāgarāja.⁶² He noted that the world began to understand and appreciate Tyāgarāja only after nearly one hundred years had passed since he was alive, but that now respect for him expands year by year. T. V. Subba Rao sees Tyāgarāja "as an *ācārya*, philosopher, poet, the most intimate friend and creator of divine music. When any one of these roles will entitle him to our homage, how shall we worship the hero who is all these in him-

self? To celebrate his glory is to add to our own spiritual wealth."⁶³

The intimate rapport which Tyagaraja is able to establish through his music causes T. V. Subba Rao to marvel;

In tempo and movement, with all the subtleties and complexities of natural changes, the songs of Tyagaraja thrill and seem to beat in true consonance with the mysterious stir within ourselves, with the throb of heart and heave of lungs.⁶⁴

T. V. Subba Rao notes the dynamic qualities of Tyāgarāja which make him "the staunchest adherent of ancient tradition" as well as the "unquestioned author of revolutionary progress." He was a master of the rules of Karṇāṭaka music, and through his innovative genius he made new laws of musical composition for others to follow.

Calling Tyāgarāja the master of song who is "unique in all respects," T. V. Subba Rao believes the saint stands without peer among the greatest "of those who have cheered and illumined the world." The power and variety of his music, the "sweetness of diction" in his poetry, the presentation of the essence of *śāstraic* philosophy in his lyrics, and the promotion of "pure music by itself as bliss and knowledge divine"—all have earned Tyāgarāja a unique status. Tyagaraja is adored by the people, revered by those with "hearts moved by the flow of concordant sounds" in the same manner as India's great *avatāra puruṣas* (incarnations of great beings) and *ācāryas* (preceptors) are hono-

red. This is because of his religious experiences; Tyāgarāja is believed to have personally known "Divine Beauty," "Divine Wisdom," and "Divine Bliss," and these experiences are reflected in his songs. Subba Rao sees Tyāgarāja as towering above other poets and composers, philosophers, prophets, sages and devotees. He is an *avatār* (divine incarnation) come on earth to teach mankind the sweetness of *Rāmanāma* (the practice of saying Rāma's name) enhanced by being joined with unique melodies.⁶⁶

Among his contemporaries, "only Tyāgarāja's genius could see so far into the future as to shape his songs to meet the progressive development of taste." This is another way of saying that Tyāgarāja was a major shaper of taste because he successfully chose the potentially viable aspects of South Indian music, and created his works with a sense of what had power to please in the changing conditions. Thus he formed new standards of excellence; having seen the direction of change he understood the needs, and facilitated the passage to a new era of Karanāṭka music.⁶⁷

TYAGARAJA AS AVATARA, AMSA AND "MESSIAH".

A number of writers have expressed the belief that Tyāgarāja was an *avatārā* (incarnation of a god or great being) or an *amsa* (embodiment or a fraction of a deity). Sundaresa Sarma, in the second canto of the Sanskrit biography of Tyāgarāja, *Sṛityāgarājacaritam*,⁶⁸ depicts the great epic poet Vālmīki in Santānika paradise—the heaven for those souls who worshipped Rāma, and the realm to which Rāma ascends when his earthly career is

completed. After reviewing the accomplishments of Śiva (who had been born as Śaṅkara), Hanuman (who had been born as Madhvācārya), Śuka (who had been born as Kabīr), and Nārada (who had been born as Tulsidās) Rāma decides that Vālmīki should take birth and give the people of earth *bhakti* by means of song. On earth, Vālmīki is shown entering into the food offering which is consumed by the future parents of Tyāgarāja, and then being born in that family. (Sarga IV, 69–a7).⁶⁹

Another writer, Harikatha Ratnakara writes:

Sri Sathguru Tyagaraja is an avathara purusha. He possessed the Amsa of Valmiki, Narada, and Siva viz., Sweet Sahityam with deep meaning of Valmiki, the music of Narada, and Ramanama pracharam (publicity) [sic] of Siva. Valmiki is hailed as 'Muni Simha' and Adi kavi, Narada as 'Sakala Loka Sathguru' and Siva, the origin of all culture [is] described as 'Nadathanu', viz., embodiment of sound....The 'Tri-murthi-amsa' of Tyagaraja will lead those who sing his krithi or hear [and] enjoy them with devotion, and they will be blessed with riches, prosperity and happiness: singing or hearing of even one of Sri Tyagaraja's krithis equals to Veda Parayana, Ramayana Parayana (i.e., listening to the Vedas and Ramayana] and a Japa Yogam resulting in happiness, prosperity, peace and liberation to the entire human nation irrespective of caste, creed, country and religion.⁷⁰

Another example of the depiction of Tyāgarāja as an incarnation of Vālmīki is found in "A Vision of Thyagaraja" by Y. Mahalinga Sastri.⁷¹ In this story, Vālmīki hears beautiful sounds and wonders what their source is. He discovers that it is Nārada, singing the song of some "mortal ... [who is a] memorable exemplar of high devotion," whose name is Tyāgarāja. Next, Tyāgarāja is pictured making music in the presence of disciples and invisible celestials. Vālmīki and Nārada enter, and listen, and Vālmīki says, "You are a pure soul. I had understood Rāma only as the son of Daśaratha... I never knew him as the Supreme Being." Tyāgarāja humbly belittles himself, and Nārada tells him, "It was you...[who] described the great war of Rāma against Rāvan, conceiving Rāma as but a human being... By dint of meditation, you, after long ages realized that Rāma is not different from the Supreme Brahman. You are Vālmīki's next but greater incarnation."⁷²

N. Sanjiva Rao, in *Sri Theagaraja, Musician-Saint*, writes in seemingly Buddhist and Christian imagery of his belief that Tyāgarāja and other sacred music composers "minister" to the spiritual needs of people by means of their *yaśaḥkāyas* (fame-bodies; the influence of their well known works). Rao writes that when Tyāgarāja had learned music from his teacher, Ṣoṇṭi Vñnkaṭaramana, "his consecrated soul saw... Sri Narada" in the dress of a *sannyasin*, come to initiate him in music. "Thus was this musical messiah, young Theagaraja, baptized in the holy waves of the Ocean of Song [literal meaning of *Svarārṇava*, the book of music

presented to Tyāgarāja by Nārada by that ordained celestial baptist, the holy Narada."⁷³ Rao continues to employ the imagery of Messianism in another passage expressing his belief that

It is something to hearten man, cheer, him up, and consolidate the true foundations of faith [to have Thyagaraja come on the stage of humanity in an age when perhaps the tide of national life in India was at its lowest ebb. Truly, personalities like Theagaraja are true Messiahs with holy gospel lips, come to assure us that even [when] the darkest hour of trials is on us [that] is just the hour when God's succor is highest at hand.⁷⁴

RAYMOND E. RIES: TYĀGARĀJA AS MAGICO-RELIGIOUS ART MUSICIAN.

The view of the American scholar Raymond E. Ries emphasizes historical and social dynamics of Tyāgarāja's role. Ries stresses the importance of Tyāgarāja's "struggle against the secularizing trend [which] was fought out in the context of the Tanjore court's relation to musicians." He also points out that Tyāgarāja's "refusal to play either for the princes of the court or for rich men tended to anchor the musical system to the traditional context of Brahman caste relations."⁷⁵ Ries pictures Tyāgarāja as a musician who stood for the belief that in singing music devoted exclusively to God the singer could remain faithful to tradition and sing with the authority of inspiration, and as one who considered livelihood by support from one's community to be "a matter of reli-

gious duty and honor." Ries further contrasts the music of the court and the music of the *bhakta*, Tyāgarāja:

....the performance of music and dance for entertainment of the court, the staging of musical combats in which musicians vied with each other in speed and facility of singing, in knowledge of *ragas* and in their powers of memory, represented to Tyagaraja music made subservient to ends other than divine. On the other hand, the tradition of *bhakti* and the theory and practice of Hinduism was congenial to the idea of the divinization of music. Thus the Karnataka tradition developed into a highly rationalized and cultivated musical system, which was at the same time firmly anchored to religious practice and sentiment, and a purely secular and highly cultivated music did not develop.⁷⁵

Ries notes Max Weber's analysis of the different effects of the role matrix of musicians on the development of musical systems: the aesthetic and expressive needs of professional musicians in a secular role differs from the magico-religious aims of sacred music, which involve prayer and magical efficacy—hence music develops along different lines in each case. Ries sees traces of the magico-religious in Karnāṭaka music, with its rules and taboos, and its miracle stories involving musicians. Yet the concerns of expressive and aesthetic needs associated with professional musicians in a secular system are found in Tyāgarāja as well. "It is the peculiarity of Karnāṭaka music to have developed an 'art' music within the confines of magico-religious motives," Ries remarks. He also notes that "an adequate history of the musician in this time needs to be written."⁷⁷

NOTES

⁴⁵ Based on an interview with Mr. Krishnamurthy in Bangalore, Oct. 30, 1981.

⁴⁶ S. Y. Krishnaswamy, *Thyagaraja, Saint and Singer* (Bangalore: Orient Longmans, 1981), p. 185.

⁴⁷ Based on an interview with Mr. Krishnamurthy in Bangalore, Oct. 30, 1981. All based on *Thyagaraja, Saint and Singer*.

⁴⁸ S. Y. Krishnaswamy, *Thyagaraja, Saint and Singer*, p. 156.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 185.

⁵⁰ P. Sambamoorthy, *Great Composers II Thyagaraja* (Madras: The Indian Music Publishing House, 1970.)

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 5–3.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 5–15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 28, 142.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 285–86.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 291–293, 341. "Bhūloka Nārada" is mentioned in Appendix I' p. 17

⁵⁷ V. Raghavan, *Sanskrit: Essays on the value of the Language and the Literature*. (Madras: The Sanskrit Education Society, 1972). See also the *Bibliography* of Raghavan's works, with an introduction by Daniel H. H. Ingalls.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 2–5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 40–81, 84.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 222.

⁶² T. V. Subba Rao, *Studies in Indian Music* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962, 1965).

⁶³ Ibid., p. 136.

⁶⁴ JMA XVIII, pp. 10–11.

⁶⁵ T. V. Subba Rao, op. cit. p. 138

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 148.

⁶⁸ Sundaresa Sarma, *Śrityāgarājacaritam* (Tanjore: General Stores, 1937).

⁶⁹ Ibid., Sarga IV. Śloka 69–77.

⁷⁰ Harikatha Ratnakara, *Nayaki*, April 1978, Vol. I, no. 3, pp. 3–4.

⁷¹ V. Apparao, ed. *Tyāgarājasvāmi Centenary* p. 62.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ N. Sanjiva Rao, *Sri Thyagaraja, Musician-Saint*, (Kumbakonam: Sri Vidya Press, 1929), p. 21.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 34.

⁷⁵ Raymond E. Ries, "Cultural Setting of South Indian Music," in *Readings on Indian Music*, ed. G. Kuppaswamy and M. Hariharan (Trivandram: College: Book House, 1979).

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 39 ff.

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“Aaraan Muni Etu Pongeno !”

(The two Rajarishis of Sri Tyagaraja)

By

P. K. SRINIVASAN, B.Sc.,

Raadhikaa was listening to the music of the radio with rapt attention when Manjula, her friend, just then entered. At that time the song* ‘Alakalallalaadaga gani’ sung by the great veteran Ariakudi was in progress. As soon as it was over, Raadhikaa switched off the radio and welcomed her friend. A lively conversation took place between them.

Raadhika: I had kept you waiting, Manjula, excuse me. It is a fine musical piece. Hope you too had enjoyed it.

Manjula: Of course, especially when it has come from that great master. I think it describes Sita's wedding.

Raa: You are partially correct. It describes one aspect of Sita's svayamvaram and simultaneously an identical one prior to that.

Man: You mean two in one?

Raa: Yes. It is the inimitable way of Sri Tyagaraja—at one single stroke he presents two or more

picturesque items which sometimes may not be interrelated at all.

Man: I am not able to grasp your point.

Raa: O.K. Let me explain. In many compositions of Sri Tyagaraja, the opening lines viz. the pallavi by itself will be a simple statement. It will be so flat that it will look as if it is not conveying any sensible idea at all—a vague loose statement, so to say. But this same pallavi when read after its anupallavi or charana as its continuation, will present altogether a marvellous picture, an idea or theme which could not be visualised earlier.

Man: Can you enlighten this point with a specific illustration?

Raa: Surely. Take the small song ‘Thathva meruga tharamaa-Para’ in Garudadwani. These four words constitute the pallavi—so simple. When trans-

* This song is studied in the form of a conversation to make the subject more interesting and at the same time getting an opportunity to raise some doubts and clarify them.

lated it will be 'The Truth is it possible to understand, the greatest'. Now as it is, there is no depth of meaning conveyed by these four words. Sri Tyagaraja has used the word 'para' at the end in a masterly way. Because this Pallavi itself when repeated gains weight in its meaning. viz. 'The highest truth, is it possible to understand? - para-thathvameruga tharamaa.' Now take the anupallavi and then read the pallavi also. It will run as 'Thath Thvamasu anu vaakyarthamu Ramaa nee vanu para thathvameruga tharamaa-That Thou art, Oh Raama! is you only. This supreme truth is it possible to understand? See what an

Pallavi :

Alakalallalaadaga gani
Aaraanmuni etu pongeno

Anupallavi :

Cheluvameeraganu Maareechuni
madhamanachu vela - (alakallalla)

Charana :

Muni kanu saika dhelisi
siva dhanuvunu virichey samayamuna
Thyagaraja vinuthuni
momuna Ranjillu (Alakallalla..)

Man:

Raa:

amount of concept is conveyed by this same simple pallavi when read together with the anupallavi. So too in the case of charana, the continuity is 'Vedha saasthara thathvam eruga tharamaa'. Hope your doubts are cleared.

Now I get your point. Please proceed further with that madhyamavathi song.

This is the unique technique of Sri Tyagaraja. In this song Alakalalla, the pallavi will present two scenes, one for the anupallavi and the other for charana. Before discussing in detail, let me give you the text of the song and its translation.

பல்லவி :

அலகல்லலாடக கனி
ஆரான் முநி எடு பொங்கெனே

அனுபல்லவி

செலுவமீரகனு மாரீசுனி
மதமணசு வேள (அலகல்லலாடக)

சரணம்

முநிகநு சைக தெலிசி
சிவ தநுவநு விரிசே ஸமயமுந
தியாகராஜ விநுதுநி
மோமுன ரஞ்ஜில்லு (அலகல்ல-
லாடக)

When translated it will be:

What an amount of joy that Royal sage would have felt on seeing the movement of the curly hairs on the forehead?

With surpassing beauty while curbing the pride of Maricha.

Understanding the hint communicated through the eyes of the rishi-while breaking the Siva's bow - on the face of the one worshipped by Thyagaraja - the glittering (curly hairs' movements)

Man: The song appears to be very simple indeed.

Raa: Yes. But did you notice that the pallavi is not presenting precisely any picture and is quite vague - no mention about when, where, whose forehead and who was the Royal sage. The pallavi by itself is non-informative, but if read after anupallavi, what a beautiful picture is presented to us - a complete drama itself so as to say - this is the ingenuity of Sri Thyagaraja.

Sage Visvamithra took Rama with him to the forest to afford protection against the rakshasas led by Subhahu and Maricha, so that he could successfully conclude his Yagna at Siddhasrama. On the sixth day, these rakshasas arrived to desecrate from the sky. Rama looked up and saw the impending danger. Immediately he hit at the chest of Maricha with the Maanavaasthra as a result of which he was thrown into the sea. Then Rama

killed Subhahu with Agneyasthra and the rest with Vaayuvaasthra.

Now there is a subtle point here requiring careful examination. Manjula, can you infer why there were lovely movements of the curly hair on Rama's forehead as described by Sri Thyagaraja, though Valmiki has not mentioned?

Man: Oh! it is simple. The demons were trying to pollute from the sky. Naturally Rama has to look up to attack them and during this action of lifting up the face, the curly hairs on his forehead moved gracefully.

Raa: That is how everybody explains, but it is not so. Sri Thyagaraja specifically says 'at the time of curbing the pride of Maricha' which is a clue for a detailed probe into this incident.

Man: I know only the outline of Ramayana. Please tell me the significant points that are hidden here.

Raa: It is the case with everybody. All the demons were in the sky only. Why should there be a specific mention of Mareecha?

Man: I don't know.

Raa: Manjula, please listen. Maricha was the first target for

Rama in that group to be attacked-rather to be removed, to be precise, so that he may not lose his life.

Man: For safety! Unimaginable! How?

Raa: Sage Viswamithra knew that Maricha had an important role yet to perform and hence not to be killed. But as he has taken the Yagna Dhiksha, he has to observe the vow of silence, till it is over and so cannot communicate with Rama by words.

அத்ய ப்ரப்ருதி வுட் ராத்ரம்
ரஜேந்தரம் ராகவாவுபென !
திசூரம் கதே ஹ்யேஷ முனி :
மௌரித்வம் ச கமிஷ்யதி ||
(பாலகாண்டம் 30-4)

He was a bit worried when he observed Rama ready to shoot an arrow. It seems Rama was able to read the face of Viswamithra. So when he saw Maricha in that group of Rakshasas he decided not to kill him and yet wanted to teach him a fitting lesson also. Looking up and while taking an aim, as a result of this thinking he started nodding his head as if signalling Maricha, before letting off the Maanavaasthra. Sage Viswamithra who was watching Rama with anxiety, heaved a sigh of relief and understood the meaning of the nodding of his head. At the same time he enjoyed the beautiful face of Sri Rama with the curly hairs moving about bewitchingly.

Man: How do you say, that he nodded his head? Valmiki has not said anything like that.

Raa: Valmiki has not told explicitly

but has hinted. Who is Thyagaraja, but an incarnation of Valmiki only. What all have not been mentioned by him in his Ramayana, were either told or suggested by Sri Thyagaraja and this is one such instance. A logical thinking will clear your doubt. Please listen carefully. Thaataka came as a gignatic figure.

தாம் த்ருஷ்ட்வா ராகவ: க்ருத்தாம்
விக்ருதாம் விக்ருதானனாம் |
ப்ரமாளேனாதிவ்ருத்தாம் ச லக்ஷ்மணம்
ஸோப்யபாஷத ||
(பாலகாண்டம் 26-9)

Rama being a young lad has to look up while releasing an arrow. Viswamithra was by his side at that time. So too is the case while slaying Subhahu and other rakshasas. Why then, there was no movement of the curly hairs if it is due to his lifting up of face? The answer is there was no need for any thinking and consequently no nodding of head by way of giving a warning signal to his opponent. That is why Thyagaraja specifically mentions 'Marichuni madama-nachu Vela'. Since he wanted him to live, he first pushed him far away from the scene of battle so that he can escape while the rest were being wiped out. Rama himself says to Lakshmana after hitting Maricha with Manavaasthra and before discharging Agneyasthra on Subhahu. Oh Lakshmana! See this benevolent Maanavaasthra. After making him lose his consciousness it is taking him far away, but not his life".

பச்ய லக்ஷ்மண ஓதேஷும் மானவம்
தர்மஸம்ஹிதம் |
மோஹயித்வா நயத்யேநம் நச
ப்ராணைர் வியுஜ்வதே ||
(பாலகாண்டம் 30-19)

From this is Rama's intention of saving Maricha quite evident. This is further confirmed by Maricha himself when Ravana approaches him later and requests him to take the form of a golden deer and effect the separation of Rama from Sita, so that he can carry her to Lanka. At that time Maricha narrates this incident and says "I was seen by Rama before I could get ready, Unperturbed he sent an arrow by which I was thrown out far away into the sea in an unconscious state.

மாம் திருஷ்ட்வா தனுஸ்ஸஜ்ஜம்
அஸம்ப்ராந்தஸ் சகாரஸ: |
தேன முக்தஸ் ததோ பாண: சிதஸ்
சத்ருநிபர்ஹண: ||
தேனாஹம் தாடித: க்ஷிப்த:
ஸமுத்ரே சதயோஜனம் |
நேச்சதா தாத மாம்ஹந்தும்
ததாவிரேண ரக்ஷித: |
ராமஸ்ய சர வேகேனே
நிரஸ்தோ ஹம் அசேதன: ||
(ஆரண்ய காண்டம் - 38)

"He did not desire to kill me and I was protected at that time by him". How Maricha came to know this? It is from the communicative nodding of head by Rama. That is why Thyagaraja says while curbing his pride, the movement of the front curly hair's were charming. This he himself again confirms in the anupallavi of the song Vachamagocharame i.e.

Re chaari Maareechuni Badaga betti-
Rendovaani sikhikosakine.
ரேசாரி மாரீசுனி படக பெட்டி
ரெண்டோவாரி சிகிகொஸகெகே
(வாசாமகோசரமே)

'Oh, Rama! how can one describe your greatness—when you have thrown the rakshaasa Maaricha into the sea and then offered the second one (Subhahu) to fire to be consumed by Agneyasthra." Hope you are having a clear grasp of the entire situation.

Man: Absolutely, no doubt and I agree with you fully. What about the charana portion-any speciality?
Raa: Yes, of course, The first scene portrayed in anupallavi has taken place in the forest where he has taken up the bow and there was destruction i.e. killing of the rakshasas. In contrast to this picture, in the charana he presents an incident in the city of Mithila, inside the palace where he has broken a bow resulting in an auspicious marriage function.

After Yagnasamrakshana, sage Viswamithra took Rama and Lakshmana to the palace of King Janaka at Mithila, when Siva's bow was brought and shown to them. On getting a signal from Viswamithra Rama lifted the bow that broke while bending. King Janaka was watching the event with much anxiety since everybody had failed to lift the bow so far, and as such he was much worried over finding a suitable bridegroom for Sita. As Rama lifted the bow and bent it for fixing the bow-string with ease and elegance, the front curly hairs on his head moved gracefully. This beauty, Janaka was enjoying. His doubt, anxiety etc. had all vanished at one stroke and his joy knew no bounds which made Thyagaraja to exclaim 'aaraan muni etu pongeno'. Thus a second picture is pre-

sented when the charana and then the pallavi are read continuously. The word Raan muni refers to Visvamithra when read after anupallavi and this same word identifies King Janaka when read after charana.

Man: Excuse me Raadhikaa. You said Raan muni - i.e. Rajarishi. But Janaka was a king and not a Rajarishi.

Raa: A pertinent question. Visvamithra was a king who became a rishi and Janaka was a king who lived like a rishi - Don't you know the Yagnavalkya episode? He proved to his disciples one day while imparting lessons to them that Janaka even though a king, was unattracted to worldly things and he is a perfect rajarishi. So Thyagaraja has appropriately used the words 'Raan muni' to imply Janaka. The joyous mood of these two Rajarishis is beyond description by words and hence Thyagaraja exclaims as 'etu pongeno', the first one out of Veera Rasa and the second case, an Adbhudha rasa. There is another beauty in this song. He narrates the two incidents in the same sequence - i.e. first the Maricha episode and then the Dhanurbhanga.

Man: A nice explanation of the song. Any speciality with the musical portion?

Raa: How can that element be absent in Thyagaraja's song? Recollect the music portion of this song and observe the happy blending of the Maathu and Dhaathu. i.e. the perfect synchronising

Man:

effect of the svara sthanas and its concerned text portion. Let me explain. Maaricha was in the 'sky, i.e. high up in the air. Rama's look also was upwards. The asthra also was shot up into the air to hit Maricha. As if suggesting all these the anupallavi starts with the higher notes i.e. thaara sthaayi svaras. In contrast to this when Rama was breaking the bow, he has to look down, bend to lift the bow and all these had happened in the normal level on the ground itself. Hence all the notes to the charana describing this incident are in madyasthayi only. Further Rama was standing firmly on the ground and the weight of that heavy bow had not pressed him down. To convey this idea, Thyagaraja had not used any lower notes. i.e. mandarasthayi svaras. Here lies the genius of Sri Thyagaraja in that he is able to present a beautiful facet of Madyamavathi raga without touching its lower notes though this raga shines well by having sancharas in the mandara sthayi. Now you recollect the musical portion of this song, keeping in mind its significant meaning, and you will realise the happy blending of the sangeetha and sahithya - the music and its text and the madhamavathi raga itself coming out in a fine form. All these elements Sri Thyagaraja has put in this small song - in a style of his own. Thank you Raadhika for this enlightening explanation

Carnatic Musical History - Its Early Stages

BY

Prof. S. R. JANAKIRAMAN

In India all music is primarily sacred. The concept of Nada Brahma and Nado-pasana and propitiation of God through music, forms the backbone of Hindu philosophy. Our music started with the chanting of the Vedas. The Saman music employed the full complemented heptatonic scale. The notes of the Saman chant were given the names of Prathama, Dviteeya, Triteeya etc. Saman music was succeeded by the Gandharva and Margi Songs. Our music itself was Gandharva. The Margi music has been defined by our Lakshnakaras as that which was sought after by Brahma, practised by Bharata and other sages in the immediate presence of Lord Siva and which was the means of attaining salvation.

The Gandharva and Margi songs had been preceded by the akhyana rhapsodies. The great epic Ramayana was sung in melodious jatis by Kusa and Lava in the court of no lesser person than Sri Rama himself. The Margi songs were all in Sanskrit.

Link with Natya

Music was at one time an adjunct of the Bharata Natya. Natya sastra itself was Bharata's exposition of Bhava, Raga and Tala. Bhava expressed through vocal music and Raga through the instruments, tala being the binding factor and Nritya is a

perfect confluence of all the three. In a sense the triple confluence of Bhava, Raga, Tala denotes both Bharata Sastra and Sangita. With this view Bharata speaks about Dhruvas and all their varieties. These Dhruvas were primarily stage songs and they were originally composed in Sanskrit and later on Prakrit was adopted.

The Raga Concept

During the premedieval period, the concept of raga was fast evolving and the raga came to be studied with greater detail with reference to the different prevailing characteristics. The development of raga also developed simultaneously. Hence the detailed raga alapana *paddhati* was expounded by Matanga himself. Thus, the idea of raga got crystallized into definite shape and the concretisation of raga forms, through definite musical entities with well-defined characteristics, was an absolute necessity. The music thus came to be regarded as not only the subject of the individual soul but also that of the other souls who had to be led through the path of music to "mukti marga" and music was the prime bhakti marg to attain the "muktimarga". The medieval period chiefly witnessed the advent of geetas and prabandhas in profusion. All of which were chiefly technical in character and scope.

Ancient Tamil Music

A study of the music of the Tamils throws a flood of light on the development of this magnificent system of our music. Between the 6th and the 10 century A. D., the Saivite saints appeared on the musical firmament with their earliest musical compositions. They had their chosen melodies as designed by the composers themselves. Though specific talas were not mentioned for these compositions, their rhythmical structure was quite suggestive of their possible time measures. In the music of the Tamils, we find the kernel of the raga system. A good number of ragas with abundance of rakti and bhava were prevalent in the ancient Tamil music.

The Tiruppugazh hymns are marvels of rhythmical exploration second to none. Talas named and unnamed, known and unknown, abound in the Tiruppugazh of Arunagirinathar. All these are the milestones in the never ending musical journey, the terminus being only the sacred abode of the Gods!

The Ashtapadis

In the meanwhile in the 12th century A. D., the all-India compositions, namely, the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva formed the bulk of musical lore. In the real sense they are the earliest musical compositions, inasmuch as *the author himself had specified the ragas and talas of his compositions*, though unfortunately they have become the things of the past due to lack of Bhagavata sampradaya. The Ashtapadis were composed at a time when the bifurcation into the two systems of music, namely, Carnatic, and Hindustani had not emerged. Though

the ashtapadis have not yet lost their divine sanctity, they have already lost their musical sanctity. They are now only the marvels of light music and light classical music.

Purandaradasa, the pioneer

No doubt, Purandaradasa laid down a foundation stone for musical pedagogy. There is no documentary evidence belonging to the relevant 15th and 16th centuries to the effect that Purandaradasa composed the well-graded swara exercises and that he devised the Malavagoula as the primary raga for the said swara exercises being sung in Malavagoula. The music in its classical aspect had not had its beginnings yet in the early 16th century. Seeds had not even been sown for the emergence of the type of classical music as it flourishes today.

Purandara laid the foundation stone of the teaching of music on certain well graded lines. He composed only Suladis, Prabandhas and of course Devarnamas. These devarnamas were mostly of the ugabhoga type. We do not come across any other musical composition of any other type, like tana varna, pada varna, ragamalika etc. in the 16th century A.D. Of course, we have the ragamalika suladis—just the different sections of suladis being however in different ragas. This is not an ideal ragamalika in the real sense of the term. It is perhaps a Kvachidamsa ragamalika, the first step in the ladder of the evolution of ragamalika.

Ramadasa's Keertanas

After Purandaradasa's time, we have Bhadrachala Ramadasa's compositions in

Telugu. Ramadasa is the first accredited composer of the keertana form in its Ekadhatu and Dvidhatu types. Ramadasa keertanas are mostly sahitya oriented with the music at a low ebb. Of course the 15th century has witnessed Tallapaka Annamacharya who has composed Adhyatma Sankeertanas and Sringara Sankeertanas in profusion, engraved in the copper plates and preserved by the T. T. Devasthanams. From the copper plates we find the keertanas having only pallavi and charanas and no demarcation of anupallavi at all.

Upto the beginning of the 17th century the musical setting was in the background and the sahitya was the dominating element. All music was essentially sacred even during this period, the 17th century A.D. We don't find the classicism of music in the real sense of the term as it came to be felt and apprehended from the time of the advent of the Musical Trinity.

Venkatamakhi

Venkatamakhi mentions the characteristics of different types of Geetas and Prabandhas and it is reported that he has himself composed quite a number of them. All these were more technical in nature with not much of musical aesthetics in it. Venkatamakhi has given the gift of his concise law for the generic scales. No doubt it is an achievement, though it could be argued that if not Venkatamakhi, some other codifier could have done what Venkatamakhi did. The enunciation of the 72-melakarta scheme is only just academising the possible number of the so-called melas on the basis of a computation derivable out of the universally known 12 notes of the gamut.

From the text of the valuable "Chaturdandi Prakasika", we don't get any clue as to the clear form of raga as envisaged through the concrete musical forms as apprehended today. Even the number of the ragas discussed in "Chaturdandi" was first limited—say 54 which, he reports, he inherited from his musical preceptor, Tanappacharya.

Kshetrajna

The contemporary of Venkatamakhi is Kshetrajna who is credited with having composed thousands and thousands of padas. The music of Kshetrajna is still a riddle wrapped in mystery. It is hardly possible to imagine such a heavy load of great music as imparted to his padas some 300 years ago. Kshetrajna was no doubt a prolific *sahityakarta*. Could he have been really the architect or the author of such marvels of raga portraits depicted in his various padas as rendered now? Only a Daniel can deliver the correct judgement.

Narayana Theertha

Narayana Teertha is another composer of the 17th century whose contribution pertains only to sacred musical literature. The "tarangas" formed the bulky cream of the sacred musical lore. Here too, the music was much at a subordinated level. The sahityas were purely divine in character, forming an end in itself, the musical setting being only the means to the end.

One other great difficulty confronting us is the authentic tradition of *gayaka sampradaya* or *bhagavata sampradaya* which is an apparently lacking element. The sankeertanas of Annamacharya, the devarnamas of Purandaradasa and to some

(Continued on page 30)

Karnataka's Colourful Cultural Season

BY

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR

The Viswa Kannada Sammelana and the fifth Birth Centenary celebration of Saint Purandaradasa lasted till the end of March this year. The Karnataka Nritya Kala Parishat had arranged a 3-day 'Nataraja Nrityotsava' (dance festival) in the open air theatre of the Chitra Kala Parishat. Though this provided an opportunity to young aspirants, the audience response was, by and large, poor. It consisted of both dance programmes and lectures based on the Nataraja concept. Some dancers missed the objective of the festival. Prof. U. S. Krishna Rao expectantly gave a very useful lecture on the Nataraja concept in the Indian dance system. Even some young dancers gave lectures.

Nandhini has arrived

Before the onset of the Sri Rama Navami music festival season, there was an important programme arranged by the I.C.C.R., that attracted most of the dancers, students and teachers, and dance lovers to the spacious auditorium of the Chowdiah Memorial hall on 15th April. It was a Bharatha Nritya programme by Smt. Nandini Alva, wife of Dr. Jeevaraj Alva, the State Minister for Kannada and Culture. The focus of the attraction in the event was that Nandini, who had already established her credentials as a competent dancer, trained by Guru C. Radhakrishna,

hailing from a family of Nattuvanars of this State, came recently under the tutelage of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam at Madras and this occasion was availed of to present the benefits derived from such a training under the personal care of Padma.

Nandini, backed by the natural endowment of beauty of face and figure, proved that she has made the grade in Nrityam, as evidenced by the vociferous applause of the packed audience. She was well supported by an orchestra and Nattuvangam troupe arranged by Padma. In fact the audience was disappointed that Padma herself did not come down to conduct Nattuvangam for her protegee.

Ramnavami Season

18th April the Day of the Sri Rama Navami festival set the ball in motion for the annual music festival in various extensions of Bangalore. But five centres vied with each other in booking famous artistes in the field from outside the state, in addition to some local musicians. Even here the month-long festivals arranged by the 48-year old Chamarajapet Sri Rama Seva Mandali organised by its founder-Secretary Sri S. V. Narayanaswami Rao and that got up at the Malleswaram Sri Rama Bhajana Sabha by the Sri Raja Rajeswari Kala Niketan for a month took the cake for booking most of the top artistes. The

overall picture presented a depleted attendance compared to previous years but the attendance varied according to the standing and popularity of the artistes.

Music Workshops

The Regional Centre for Research and Development of the State Sangita Nritya Academy under the direction of Sri B.V.K. Sastri, was quite active during this quarter. There was a Workshop on the compositions of Sri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, which was directed by Sri S. Krishnamurthi, grandson of Mysore Vasudevacharya-mentor in Music to the Maharaja. About 10 musicians, mostly ladies, benefitted by this workshop. The Centre arranged lectures on classical dance by Dr. Sunil Kothari, (National professor) for the benefit of local dancers. The subjects dealt with were post-independence era revival, propagation, institutionalisation, impact of the west and innovations.

Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari conducted a music workshop, professedly to reinforce and tone up the art of young and upcoming artistes of this state. In practice most of the beneficiaries were seniors. The valedictory function of this workshop was a gala affair as the stage was occupied by two stars of the musical firmament-Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi and Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari. The former distributed the certificates to the participants in the Workshop, who also presented, as evidence of their training, songs in Todi in its different facets, based on the compositions of different composers.

Percussion Art Festival

The Palghat Mani Iyer Art Centre has been registered under the rechristened

name of 'Percussive Art Centre'. It celebrated its fifth six-day annual music festival at the Malleswaram Sri Rama Bhajana Sabha hall from 27th May. It was inaugurated by Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari, who also gave the inaugural concert. Throughout the festival, the accent was on the many facets of the percussive art. The highlights of the programmes included an all-ladies percussion ensemble, a vocal concert in which the ten-member percussion troupe of the 'Laya Lahari'-wing of the Ayyanar college of Music led by Anur Ramakrishna on violin and Bangalore Venkataram on Gottu vadyam and Sammela, played a dominant role. On the penultimate day (May 31st) veteran mridangist M. S. Ramiah was felicitated and honoured with the title of 'Mridanga Kala Siromani', a glittering shawl and a cash award of Rs. 1,500/ out of the K. Puttu Rao Memorial Endowment created by his son, Sri K. K. Murthi as Palghat Mani Iyer Award. It may be recalled here that the previous awardees were all from outside the state such as Palghat Raghu, Vellore Ramabhadran and Ramanathapuram C. S. Murugabhupathi. M. S. Ramiah is the first awardee from within the state. On the concluding day Pandit Nikhil Ghosh of Bombay gave a lecture demonstration on percussion art vis-a-vis Tabla. Vidwan Bangalore K. Venkataram has been masterminding the activities of the art centre.

Composers' Days

Venkataram also had arranged a series of lecture-demonstrations in a 5-day 'Composers day series' at the Indian Institute of World Culture, under the auspices of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat.

Six local musicians-notably five of them ladies-gave lecture demonstrations on the life and compositions of Kumara Ettendra Maharaja, Subharama Dikshitar, Mayuram Viswanatha Sastri, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan, Mysore Chikka Rama Rao, Papanasani Sivan, Shahji Maharaja, Veena K. V. Krishnamachar, Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma, Prof. P. Sambamurthi and Tiger Varadachar. This was a worthwhile series in tracing the compositional tradition in our music.

Miscellaneous

The Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan, the Indian Institute of World Culture, the Every Friday Cultural Evening Series, the Every Monday Weekly Art Exhibition maintained their activities throughout this quarter. Shankara Jayanthi and Basava Jayanthi cultural activities added to the fullness of the season. The commercial concern 'Philips', added to the excitement of the cultural season by presenting two concerts at the Chowdiah Memorial hall-one by Pandit Jasraj-Hindusthani vocal and a Gottuvadyam recital in the South Indian style by the prodigy Ravi Kiran in the company of Umayalpuram Sivaraman (mridangam) and Palghat Sundaram ghatam).

On the 9th of June a meeting of the Southern Zonal Cultural Council held its inaugural meeting in Bangalore. It was inaugurated by Sri S. L. Khurana, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, with Dr. Jeevaraj

Alva chairing the meeting. The latter has cautioned the centre over the choice of the Festival of India programmes without even extending the basic courtesy of consulting State Governments in the choice of artistes for the festivals held in U.S.A. and France, thus converting it into the Festival of the Union Government-and not of India. Mr. Manmohan Singh, the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, agreed that the wishes of the Zonal councils could not be ignored.

Sangita Bhushana M. A. Narasimha-char, a product of the residential music college of the Annamalai University at Chidambaram during the palmy days of stalwarts like Tanjore Ponniah Pillay, Tiger Varadachar, Sathur Krishna Iyengar and T. K. Rangachar has been elected to preside over the 17th Musicians' conference of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat.

Bangaloreans also reacted to the shocking news of the passing away of the musical genius of this century-Flute T. R. Mahalingam. A condolence meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sri K. K. Murthi, who promised that steps would be taken to suitably establish a memorial to Mali.

Within a short period two veteran musicians passed away, one was Smt. Lakshmi Bai Bhawe (Hindusthani vocalist) and Dr. B. Devendrappa (87 years old) Carnatic Vocalist and ambidextrous instrumentalist.

(Continued from page 27)

extent Ramadasa's keertanas, the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva and the Tarangas of Narayanateertha all suffer from this severe handicap.

It is only the compositions of those composers forming the pre-Trinity group and flourishing after the 17th century or

even say 1750 A. D. that have fortunately escaped this debacle. Such compositions have an assured authenticity of their mode of rendering inasmuch as they have been handed down to us not only from mouth to mouth but from hand to hand, so to speak.

News And Notes

Trinity Jayanthi Celebrations at Tiruvarur

Almost the entire musical fraternity responded to the invitation of the trustees of the "Sri Kanji Kamakotipeeta Karnataka Sangitha Seva Trust" to join in the Trinity Jayanthi Celebrations conducted at Tiruvarur between 9th and 15th May 1986. The concerts, to judge from Doordharshan's presentations as well as the reports of those who attended them, had the feel of reverence and the tang of sentiment appropriate to the occasions, particularly as they were conducted within the precincts of the reconstructed birthplaces of the Trinity. It is now clear that this series would, hereafter, be a hardy annual, perhaps even competing, as the years pass, with the Aradhana festival at Tiruvaiyaru though that function takes place earlier. One hopes that lavishness would be equalled by the utility of it.

Some basic questions, however, arise such as the application of the funds to the fulfilment of salient objectives, e.g. giving the proper orientation to the trends in Carnatic music today by periodic teaching courses conducted by competent elders and making the necessary infra-structure facilities at Tiruvarur itself. The callowness of musical outlook today-of musicians as well as the public which patronises them-calls for much thought and more action, for the restoration of the pristine purity of our music. So far no concrete scheme has

emanated from the Trust for the public to glimpse what constructive ideas they have-if they do, they are keeping them very close to their chest! One is impelled to voice such apprehensions not only because they are not unfounded but because it is a common experience that there is a lot of well-meant incompetence in the management of many of our social and cultural institutions.

Srirangam Rayagopuram Fund-Bombay's Contribution

Bombay has ever been the home of great causes. It was the Karnataka Sangeetha Seva Trust of the Kanji Kamakoti Peeta last year, when Bombay responded generously to the appeal for funds to renovate the birthplaces of the Trinity. This work then put in by the Shanmukhananda Sabha and its sympathisers almost pales into insignificance by the side of the Himalayan efforts made this year by the Srirangam Royagopuram Renovation Funds Bombay Committee of which Shri V. Subramanian is the president. The funds collected exceeded Rs. 7 lakhs, a remarkable achievement to which that doyen of musicians, Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi contributed substantially with her divinely melodic voice and most unselfishly as is her wont. Her great concert took place in the Shanmukhananda Hall on the 24th May 1986 in the immediate presence of Shri R. Venkataraman, the Vice-President, Ministers of Maharashtra

and Shri C. V. Narasimhan, former Under-Secretary General of the U. N. MSS was in great form and delighted the over-flowing hall of music lovers with her unrivalled and incomparably soulful music in the great Carnatic tradition.

It is the custom in Bombay to form as wide-based a committee as possible of representatives of social and cultural bodies, so as to collect funds for a great public cause. But as those who have access to the inside working of these ad hoc committees know very well, it is only a handful of indefatigable and well motivated persons who actually carry out the demanding duties of approaching the public, the companies for advertisements, for donations etc. In the instant case, it can be stated without fear of serious contradiction that a major share of the credit should go to Sarvashree S. Seshadri and R. Kannan, the General Secretaries of the Committee as well as to the Hony. Treasurers Shri C. Krishnamachari and Shri E. R. R. Chari. This became evident when Shri S. Seshadri, Shri C. Krishnamachari and Shri Muthuswamy were deputed to handover the first instalment of the proceeds (Rs. 3 lakhs) in person to His Holiness the 44th Jeer Swamiji at Srirangam. The southern newspapers gave fine coverage to the efforts made in Bombay in this behalf, both the English and the vernacular press; and without wishing to be uncharitable to the latter, this is the first time Bombay's munificence and the Shanmukhananda Sabha's vital role in calling it into play for a cause in the South has received well deserved publicity.

Palghat Mani Iyer

Another Palghat Mani Iyer death

anniversary has come and gone on 30th May, which was also the day when Mali passed away. And though we have many mridangam players mushrooming in the field, not excluding those who have got to the top like Sivaraman, Raghu, Ramabhadran, Mani etc, whose takings must be a record, the sad fact remains that none of these virtuosi have been able to achieve the wizardry of that percussion genius. No one has forgotten the immense thrill and happiness that Mani Iyer gave to lovers of music. Indeed, in a manner of speaking, Mani Iyer needs no memorial at all as he is already enshrined irrevocably in their hearts.

Flute Mahalingam

Elsewhere in these pages, we publish two articles on Flute T.R. Mahalingam who died recently. "Mali" was the dream copy for newsreporters and scribes as he managed to hog the limelight whether he played well or badly. Even in private conversation or interviews he was full of wit and sarcasm. Fear of unpopularity on account of holding startling views and opinions on music and musicians never affected his style and he continued to strike odd poses. But behind all that tomfoolery lay a very perceptive and thoughtful musician who could, like the Lord Krishna or Orpheus of old, melt hearts and stones with his incomparable music played strictly according to tradition and classic integrity. For the modern musicians who in their search for the El Dorado of music, resort to various gimmicks-not least, horrible amplification of sound-and have succeeded in making the situation totally topsyturvy, the universal impact of Mali's music and

his indubitable popularity has a moral-if they only care to heed it.

A little known fact is Mali's great solicitude for his sishyas-most of them are well off as artists-he treated them as equals. He would even go out of the way to back their cause. One of the last acts of Mali, a few days prior to his death, was to write to Shri Rajiv Gandhi urging A. I. R. to follow a liberal policy in the grading of artistes so as to give youth a chance to come up. He specifically cited the cases of Raghu-Ravi, the sons of his sishya L. Sundaram and pressed for more realistic policies. And the Prime Minister of India acknowledged receipt of Mali's letter and promised to look into it. Apparently, no Punjab tangle can close the P.M.'s mind to the nation's other needs! And the P. M. would no doubt have taken note of Mali's distaste for titles and the fibre of his artistic personality

T. Sankaran

It was a happy idea of the Srut. foundation and Sankarabaranam to felicitate Sri T. Sankaran on his 81st birthday, by arranging an evening of song and dance at the Mylapore Fine Arts Club auditorium on 23rd June '86. Among the speakers, Sri P.V. Krishnamurthy's remarks, walking down Memory Lane, were outstanding not only for the nostalgic memories he evoked but for showing what a warm heart, always

full of consideration for the young aspirant in music, Sri Sankaran had had always. As Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has said, "*Fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else*—Very rarely to those who say to themselves; let me be a celebrated individual". The grandson of Veena Dhanammal of illustrious memory is a man of great parts-he has an enviable repertoire of Jawalis, Padams and Krithis which he generously teaches to young and old; he has had a unique administrative experience in A.I.R. where he helped to shape out many healthy policies designed to uphold the dignity of classical music. More than anything else, Sri Sankaran's earliest years were spent among great maestros like Trichy Govindaswami Pillai, Puducottah Dakshinamurthy Pillai, T. N. Rajaratnam, Conjeevaram Naina Pillai and other stalwarts. Some of their greatness could not but rub off on Sankaran himself and help to develop in him a high sense of aesthetics, an immense respect for classical discipline and a human approach to artists in general. His case was very different from that of the great painter Van Gogh who said "One may have a blazing hearth in one's soul. But nobody ever comes to sit by its side". Many have experienced Sankaran's warm humanity and still continue to do so. His ripe wisdom in the arts is available to anyone who wishes to profit by it. "Shanmukha" wishes him many happy returns.

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The Genius of Flute T. R. Mahalingam

By

K. S. MAHADEVAN

That the great flute maestro T. R. Mahalingam is no more (59 years) will fill the hearts of all music lovers with great sadness. Although his best years had passed, "Mali" as the flautist was affectionately known, had left indelible impressions of his musical felicity, so that one's memories of his brilliant performances have remained ever green. He succeeded in creating a world which, by the force of his imagination and splendid gifts, he compelled us to recognise as peculiarly his own. And that is a sign of genius, the endowed gift from Heaven. The Creator, the supreme artist, carries the scars of his greatness, it is said: This was true of Mali as well since the day when an overzealous parent persisted in bringing into the music world the young Mali, even before he was ten years old and boasted to the musicians of the day about the prowess of his son in *layam*. It had a disastrous effect upon Mali's psyche in later years.

Mali was his own preceptor and guide for many years, dazzling listeners with the ineffable melody of his flute and the precocity of his playing. It is said that geniuses somehow absorb the culture they need and discover adequate techniques of expression. Mali created a tidy world of his own and his innumerable admirers were proud to be enticed into it. The half-century of Palladam Sanjiva Rao's domination with the flute was swept away by the structural sweep, the limpid serenity and the

soaring quality of Mali's tidal wave. One had to go back to that other genius, Sarabha Sastrigal, for a parallel outpouring of great music.

It must be remembered that the emergence of Mali was coeval with what is called the Augustan period of Carnatic music, which over a period from 1935-65 witnessed the high noon of veterans like Palladam, Ariakudy, Viswanatha Iyer, Semmangudy, GNB, Alathoor Brother S, Madurai Mani and Flute Swaminatha Pillai. And yet there was no denying the great pull that Mali exerted on music lovers who would rather gamble on Mali's touching his matchless form (as in the case of his proto-type TNR). To them, Mali was an artist who could take you to the mountain top, the great peaks of Carnatic music or take you down, with his inimitable playing in *mandhara sthayi*, to the valleys where multi-hued flowers grew.

No formal analysis in the abstract can explain the inner essences of Carnatic music but certainly there was a sea-change with the advent of Mali. He resorted to no outmoded devices, his music was classical and traditional to the core. His raga alapanas were lofty and profound and amounted to visions in tone, besides being an organic instrumental tissue. For the Kritis, he deliberately adopted a vilamba kala, the stylistic range of which ransacked the life and the gamut of the raga encapsulated in it. His choice of basic auste-

terity, illumined by flashes of sober beauty and brilliance of craftsmanship and fancy, stands to the eternal credit of Mali. Such art and such powerful music could only have come from considerable reserves of intellect and emotion. Listeners would never forget his soaring quality, its sup- pleness, all flawless on the sruthi. The beauty of it was that he made all this com- plexity intelligible to the layman listener.

The best period of Mali's career was when he was associated with Papa Venkataramayya (Violin) and Tanjore Vaidyanatha Iyer, both of whom he held in high veneration and was even content, on occasions, to be guided by them in the choice of pieces! Thus one came across crimson displays of Sahana, Begada, Sankarabharanam, Harikhamboji, Kapi etc. with Tyagaraja Kritis following. In a later period, his music prospered in the company of Prof. T. N. Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer. They would stimulate Mali to great displays of raga or kirti rendering. As far as rhythm was concerned, Mali was a match for Mani Iyer's percussive genius. During their "duels" in Pallavi or swaras, such was the cross-fire of the impact of the two geniuses that, as someone put it vividly, if a piece of paper was thrust across at them, it might have caught fire! And yet,

Mani Iyer held him in endearing esteem.

Style in art is the perfect relationship between Form and Content; and Mali's style reflected this equation. In his hand, a Khamas Swarajati would bloom like a rose. "Kaddana variki" in Thodi would turn out to be intensely sensitive, moving us to the marrow in the charanam "Neeth- ura Nirakaranji". The sonorous and stately gait of "Paramatmudu" (Vagadeesvari) could be sublime. "Evarimata" (Khamboji) could be the quintessence of music (once Semmangudi was moved to tears when Mali, in the neraval on "Bhakta Parathee", distilled the sweetness of Khamboji. Mali's anatomy was indeed fused with his flute.

Erratic he was at times—which genius was not? But Mali had a good measure of himself. He was a standing example of the cozy untruth that geniuses are humble at heart. With his death, one cannot help feeling that an epoch of matchless flute playing has ended, although his sishyas N. Ramani, Prapancham Sitaram, B. N. Suresh, N. Kesi, Srinivasan, Shankar etc try to carry on the torch he lit. But then Mali was so unique. As Neville Caadus put it (with respect to cricket): "Nature never even tries to repeat a masterpiece - she breaks the mould in which it is fashioned". (Courtesy, *Indian Express, Madras*)

"SHANMUKHA" (QUARTERLY)

Subscription Rate

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Masters of Indian Music - Recordings

The Festival of India, which was held in the United States and France during 1985-86, was a cultural event unprecedented in the two countries in recent years. Over a period of 18 months in the United States and 12 months in France it unfolded the rich tapestry that is India with all its colour and diversity. The panorama featured exhibitions, music concerts, dance recitals, cinema and theatre, seminars, symposia, workshops and lectures. As Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi observed "the festival dispelled distortions and led to a new vision of India".

The Festival resulted in an extensive exposure of Indian culture to international audiences. Among the varied programmes of performing arts, music was one of the highlights, and will continue to remain so for future Festivals.

The Festival authorities considered that the music of India should be perpetuated in the form of a commemorative album of permanent value. They accordingly arranged for an album to be compiled which would provide an enduring frame of reference to the music that has been heard not only by foreign ears but by Indian ears also. The unique album, the first of its kind in the annals of Indian music recording, was released by the Prime Minister of India at a function held at the Delhi residence of Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, Chairman of the Festival of India, on May 29, 1986. Living musicians, excerpts from whole music, had

a place in the album, were invited to be present at the function and personally receive copies of it.

The album contains a rare collection of the recorded music of some of the greatest musicians of India, both Hindu- stani and Karnatak. The album notes, which are extensive, describe the high points of our tradition in music as expressed by both the styles. Mrs. Sheila Dhar of Delhi, eminent Hindustani vocalist and critic, selected the items for Hindustani music and Mr. T. S. Parthasarathy, well- known musicologist of Madras, compiled the excerpts from Karnatak music.

A total number of 24 musicians, comprising vocalists, instrumentalists and percussion artistes have been included in the album. The earliest musician to be presen- ted is Zohra Bai of Agra, a legend in princely courts, whose tarana in Bhoopali, recorded in 1911, figures first in the Hindustani section. This is followed by giants like Abdul Karim Khan, Fayyaz Khan, Kesar Bai Kerkar, Krishnarao Shankar Pandit (92, who received the first copy from the P.M.), Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Amir Khan, Gangubai Hangal, Ravi Shankar and others. Karnatak music is represented by Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. T.N. Rajaratnam Pillai, Madurai Mani Iyer, Palghat Mani Iyer, M. D. Ramanathan,

Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar, D. K. Pattam-
mal and the late-lamented T. R. [Maha-
lingam.

The project Coordinator for the album
is Mrs. Asharani Mathur, Director of
Publicity, Festival of India and the art
work has been done by artist Gopi Gajwani
The rare excerpts and photographs were
collected from the All India Radio, the
Gramophone Company of India and private
sources. The album has been manufactu-
red and distributed by the Gramophone
Company of India Limited, Dum Dum,
Calcutta.

Thanking the two compilers of the
album, Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, Chairman of
the Festival of India, says "An album of

this nature could never have been possible
without the great commitment and care
exercised by the selectors of its music. For
their untiring efforts I would like to thank
Sheila Dhar, who has chosen the Hindu-
stani music, and T.S. Parthasarathy, who
selected the Karnatak music. Between
them, they have brought alive the spirit of
our classical music through some of its
great masters".

Limitations of space have perhaps
prevented the inclusion of all the great
masters and all the musical streams that
make up the Indian tradition. The album
will whet the appetite of all music lovers
who are bound to look forward to more
albums of this nature.

New Delhi (From A Correspondent)

“நான் செய்த முதல் கச்சேரி”

புல்லாங்குழல் டி. ஆர். மஹாலிங்கம் *

என். ஆர். பூவராகன்

நான் முதல் முதலில் கச்சேரி செய்
தது ஒன்பது வருஷங்களுக்கு முன்பு
(1933). என்னுடைய சிறுபிராயம் முதல்
இன்றுவரை என் வாழ்க்கையில் ஏற்பட்
டுள்ள சம்பவங்கள் எனக்கு மிகத்
தெளிவாக ஞாபகம் இருக்கின்றன. என்
வாழ்க்கையில் இவ்விதத்தில் நான்
முன்னணிக்கு வர எனக்கேற்பட்ட இன்
னல்கள் கொஞ்சநஞ்சமல்ல.

எங்களுக்குத் தலைமுறையாய் பூர்வீக
மாயுள்ள இடம் திருத்துரைப்பூண்டி
தாலுக்காவைச் சேர்ந்த தலைஞாயர்
என்னும் ஊர். என் தகப்பனர் ஒரு
மெக்கானிக்கல் இஞ்சினியராயிருந்தார்.
சொந்தத்திலேயே தொழில் நடத்தி வந்
தார். எங்கள் குடும்பம் திருவிடை
மருதூரில் இருக்கும்போதுதான் நான்
பிறந்தது. நான் அவ்வூரில் பிறந்ததாலே
யேதான் எனக்கு மஹாலிங்கம் என்ற
பெயர் சூட்டப்பட்டதாகத் தெரிகிறது.
தலைஞாயர் என்ற ஊர் சங்கீதத்தில்
மிகவும் பெயர்பெற்ற ஊராயிருந்தும் கூட
எங்கள் வம்சத்தில் இரண்டு தலைமுறை
களாக சங்கீதத்தில் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க
பற்றுதல் கிடையாது. என்னுடைய
மூன்றாவது வயதில் என் கையில் ஒரு
பெரிய சிரங்கு புறப்பட்டிருந்தது. அதை
ஆப்பரேஷன் செய்யவேண்டிய நிமித்தம்
நான் மட்டும் திருச்சிக்குச் செல்ல வேண்
டியதாயிற்று. அங்கு என் பாட்டனர்
வீட்டில் இருந்துவந்தேன். பின்பு என்
தந்தையும் குடும்பசகிதம் வந்துசேர்ந்தார்.

வாய்ப்பாட்டு, புல்லாங்குழல்

என் தகப்பனாரின் மாமா ஜால்ரா
கோபாலய்யர் என்பவர் சங்கீதத்தில்
நிபுணர். நாகப்பட்டினத்தில் இருந்தார்.
என் தகப்பனர் அவருக்கு உதவி செய்
வதற்காக அவரை திருச்சிக்கு வர
வழைத்து ஒரு சங்கீதப் பள்ளிக்கூடம்
ஏற்படுத்திக் கொடுத்தார்.

ஸ்ரீ ஜால்ரா கோபாலய்யர் அவர்கள்
தான் ஆசிரியர். முதல் முதலில் அப்
பள்ளிக்கூடத்தில் நானும் என் சகோதரி
களுமேதான் சேர்க்கப்பட்டோம். அதன்
பிற்பாடு பல பிள்ளைகள் சங்கீதம் கற்றுக்
கொள்ள முன் வந்தனர். முதல் முதலில்
வாய்ப்பாட்டுக் கற்றுக்கொள்வதற்காகத்
தான் நான் சேர்க்கப்பட்டேன். என்
தமையனாரும் மற்றும் இரண்டு மூன்று
பிள்ளைகளும் ஸ்ரீ ஜால்ரா கோபாலய்யரவா
களிடம் புல்லாங்குழல் கற்றுவந்தார்கள்.
அவர்களைப்பார்த்த எனக்கும் வாய்ப்
பாட்டைவிட புல்லாங்குழல் கற்றுக்கொள்
வதில் அதிக ஆவல் ஏற்பட்டது. பள்ளிக்
கூடத்தில் ஒருவருமில்லாத சமயத்தில்
மேஜைமேலிருக்கும் புல்லாங்குழலை
எடுத்து நான் ஊதிப்பார்ப்பதுண்டு.
எடுத்த எடுப்பிலேயே சப்தம் வெகு சுத்த
மாக இருந்ததால் என் ஆசை மேலும்
அதிகரித்தது. இது மாதிரியே வெகு
நாட்கள் ஒருவருக்கும் தெரியாமல் ஊதி
வந்தேன். எனக்குத் தெரியாமலேயே என்
குரு கோபாலய்யர் சில நாட்களாக என்
வாசிப்பைக் கேட்டுவந்தார் போலவே
எண்ணவேண்டி இருக்கிறது.

* பேட்டி ஜனவரி 18, 1942—“ஹனுமான்” வார இதழ்

ஒருநாள் நான் புல்லாங்குழல் ஊதிக் கொண்டிருந்ததை என் குரு கேட்டு என்னை வாய்ப்பாட்டை நிறுத்திவிட்டுப் புல்லாங்குழலே ஸாதகம் செய்யச் சொன்னார். அப்போது எனக்கு வயது ஐந்து. அந்தச் சமயங்களில் என் தகப்பனாரோ இதற்கு நேர் விரோதம். புல்லாங்குழல் ஊதினால் ஹிருதயம் கெட்டுவிடுமென்று என் தந்தை என்னை ஊதக் கூடாதென்று கண்டித்திருந்தார். எனக்கோ அதைத் தவிர வேரொன்றிலும் புத்தி செல்ல வில்லை என்ன செய்வதென்றே எனக்குத் தோன்றவில்லை.

பைரவி! வர்ணம் ஸாதகம்

இருந்தாலும் என் ஊக்கத்தை மட்டும் கைவிடவில்லை. என் தகப்பனார் வெளியில் செல்லும் சமயங்களில் அவருக்குத் தெரியாமல் புல்லாங்குழலை எடுத்து ஸாதகம் செய்து வருவேன். இப்படியாகவே பைரவி வர்ணம் வரையில் ஸாதகம் செய்துவிட்டேன். அதன் பிறகு தோடி வர்ணமும் நாளடைவில் வாசித்துவிட்டேன். இதையறிந்த என் குரு ஸ்ரீகோபாலய்யர் என்னைப் பாராட்டினார். என் தந்தையும் இதை எப்படியோ அறிந்து கொண்டுவிட்டார். யானையை சுளகால் மூட முடியுமா? என் நோக்கத்தைப் பூர்ணமாய் அறிந்த என் தந்தையின் மனசும் சற்று இளகியது. என் ஆவல் படியே புல்லாங்குழல் கற்றுக்கொள்ள என் தந்தை அனுமதித்தது என் பாக்யமென்றே சொல்ல வேண்டும்.

முதல் முதலில் ஜால்ரா கோபாலய்யர் எனக்கு “வாதாபிகணபதி” என்ற ஹம்ஸத்வனி கீர்த்தனையைச் சொல்லி வைத்தார். நாளடைவில் கல்பன ஸ்வரம், பல்லவி முதலியவைகளை வாசிக்கவும் கற்றுக்கொண்டுவிட்டேன். இவ்விதமாக ஸ்ரீகோபாலய்யர்களிடம் இரண்டு வருஷ காலம் சிச்சை பெற்றேன். ஒருநாள் காலை என் பெரிய தகப்பனார் ஐ. சுப்பிர

மணிய ஐயரென்பவர் மத்யமாவதிக்கு ஆரோகண அவரோகணஸ்வரம் சொல்லி வித்தார். அன்று மாலையே மத்யமாவதி ராகத்தைப் புல்லாங்குழலில் வாசித்து விஸ்தாரமாக ஸஞ்சாரம் செய்தேன். இதை இன்றுதினமும் பாராட்டுகிறார் என் பெரிய தகப்பனார்.

“புல்லாங்குழல் ரகமே இல்லை”

அதிலிருந்து இத்துறையில் என்னை முன்னுக்குக் கொண்டுவரப் பொறுப்பு என் தந்தையைச் சார்ந்ததாயிற்று. ஒரு சமயம் திருச்சி ஸபாவில் பல்லடம் ஸ்ரீ சஞ்சீவிராவ் அவர்கள் திருச்சி வந்து ஸபா காரியதரிசி வீட்டில் தங்கி இருந்தார். என் தகப்பனாரும் என் தமையனாரும் பலர் யோஜனையின்பேரில் ஸ்ரீ சஞ்சீவிராவ் அவர்களிடம் அப்யஸிக்கச் செய்ய அபிப்பிராயப்பட்டனர். ஸ்ரீ சஞ்சீவிராவ் திருச்சி வந்திருந்த சந்தர்ப்பத்தை நமுவவிடாமல் இந்த நோக்கத்தைக்கொண்டு என் தந்தை என்னை அவரிடம் அழைத்துச் சென்றார். அங்கே சஞ்சீவிராவ், மருங்காபுரி கோபாலகிருஷ்ண ஐயர், தஞ்சாவூர் வைத்யநாத ஐயர் முதலியவர்கள் இருந்தனர். எல்லோரையும் நாங்கள் வணங்கினோம். அங்கிருந்த திருச்சி சங்கீதசபா காரியதரிசி என்னை ஸ்ரீ சஞ்சீவிராவிடம் அறிமுகம் செய்துவைத்து என் வாசிப்பைக் கேட்கும்படி சிபார்சு செய்தார். நான் பைரவி வர்ணமும், “எந்துகுதயாராதாரா” என்ற தோடி கீர்த்தனமும் வாசித்தேன். பாதி வாசித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கும்போதே, ஸ்ரீ சஞ்சீவிராவ் எழுந்து மாடிக்குச் சென்று விட்டார். இது எங்கள் அனைவருக்கும் மிகுந்த ஏமாற்றமளித்தது. என் தந்தையும் விடாமல் மாடிக்குச் சென்று சஞ்சீவிராவ் அவர்களின் அபிப்பிராயத்தைக் கேட்டார். அதற்கு அவர்: “இது புல்லாங்குழல் ரகமே இல்லை” என்று சொல்லி விட்டார். நாங்கள் ஏமாற்றத்துடன் வீடு திரும்பினோம்.

சிதம்பரத்தில் ஏமாற்றம்

அதன் பின்னர் சிதம்பரம் ஸங்கீத ஸர்வகலாசாலையில் என்னை சேர்ப்பதென்று என் தந்தை முடிவு செய்யவே நானும் என் தந்தையும் சிதம்பரம் புறப்பட்டுச் சென்றோம். அந்தச்சமயம் ஸ்ரீ ஸபேசய்யரவர்கள் அங்கு பிரின்ஸ்பால் உத்யோகம் வகித்து வந்தார். அவருடைய தயவை நாடினோம். அவரிடம் புல்லாங்குழல் வாசித்துக்காட்டினேன். அதைக் கேட்டுவிட்டு அவர் “இப்பையனுக்கு நாதஸ்வரம் சொல்லிவையுங்கள்” என்று என் தகப்பனாரிடம் கிண்டலாகச் சொன்னார். என் தகப்பனாரின் மனம் அந்தச் சமயம் எவ்வாறிருந்திருக்குமென்று நான் சொல்லவே வேண்டியதில்லை. அதற்கு மூன்றாவது வருஷத்தில் அதே ஸர்வகலாசாலையில் கனம் வி. எஸ். சீனிவாஸ சாஸ்திரிகள் அவர்கள் அழைப்பிற்கிணங்கி அதே மேடையில் கச்சேரி செய்தேன். அப்போதுதான் என் தந்தை தன் பிரயாசையின் பலனைப் பூர்ணமாய் அனுபவித்தார்.

எனது எட்டாவது வயதில் சென்னை வந்தோம். எனது ஒன்றுவிட்ட தமையன் ஸ்ரீ ராஜாமணி சென்னையில் பிடிவட்டியுடன் சொல்லிவைத்துக்கொண்டிருந்தார். நான் அவர் வீட்டிலேயேதான் இருந்தேன். அவர் எனக்கு இரண்டு மூன்று கீர்த்தனங்கள், கச்சேரியில் வாசிக்கும் தோரணிகள் முதலியவைகளைச் சொல்லிவைத்தார். அவர் எங்கு போனாலும் என்னையுங்கூட அழைத்துச் செல்லுவார். டிபார்டிகள், பஜனைகள் முதலியவைகளில் என்னை புல்லாங்குழல் வாசிக்கச் சொல்வார். இப்படியாகவே நானும் அப்யஸித்து வந்தேன்.

சென்னையில் முதல் கச்சேரி

மைலாப்பூரில் 1933-ஆம் வருஷம் தியாகப்பிரம்ம உதஸவத்தில் எனக்கு

முதன் முதலாக கச்சேரி செய்யும் பாக்யம் கிடைத்தது. முதல் முதலில் என் வித்வத் ஸ்ரீ தியாகப்பிரம்மம் ஸந்ரிதியில் அரங்கேற்றும் பாக்யம் எனக்குக் கிடைத்ததென்றால் அதைவிட வேரென்ன உற்சாகம் இருந்திருக்கக்கூடும்! அன்றைய தினம் ஸ்ரீ ராஜாமணி அவர்களே எனக்கு பிடிவட்டியாக வாசித்தார். நான் விவரம் தெரியாத சிறுவனாகையால் எனக்கு சபைக்கோழை என்பதே தெரியவில்லை. அப்போது எனக்கு வயது ஒன்பதுதான். கச்சேரி நடக்கும்போதே எனக்கு சபையோரில் சிலரால் இரண்டு மூன்று பட்டுகள் பரிசாக அளிக்கப்பட்டன. முடிவில் ஒரு வித்வான் ஒருவர்-இன்னொருவர் ஞாபகம் இல்லை-என்னைப் பாராட்டிப் பேசிவிட்டு ஒரு பட்டைப் பரிசாக அளித்தார்.

ஸங்கீத கிரந்தங்கள் பரிசீலனை

இதன் பிறகு என் தகப்பனார் “சங்கீத ரத்னாகரம்”, “சங்கீத பாரிஜாதம்”, “சதுர்தண்டிப் பிரகாசிகை” முதலிய அரிய சங்கீத புஸ்தகங்களை வரவழைத்து, அவைகளைத் தமிழ்ப்படுத்தி எனக்குச் சொல்லி வைத்தார். இதிலிருந்து என் தகப்பனாரும் சங்கீதத்தில் அபாரமான விஷயங்களைத் தெரிந்துகொண்டிருக்கிறார், சங்கீதம் எவரையும் வசிகரித்துவிடும் என்பதற்கு இது ஒரு சிறந்த உதாரணம்.

அனேகமாக சில ஸீனியர் பக்கவாத் யக்காரர்கள் என்னுடன் வாசிக்கத் தயங்கிக் கொண்டிருக்கையில், ஸ்ரீமருங்காபுரி கோபாலகிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்கள் எனக்கு ஆதரவளித்து வாசிக்க முன் வந்ததை நான் ஒருகாலும் மறக்க முடியாது. நான் அவருக்கு என்றும் கடமைப்பட்டிருக்கிறேன். இதன் பிறகுதான் மற்ற ஸீனியர் வித்வான்கள் எனக்கு பக்கவாத்யம் வாசிக்க முன் வந்தனர். மொத்தத்தில் இந்தத் துறையில் இவ்வளவு சோதனைகளுக்கிடையில் நான் வெற்றியுடன் வெளிவந்தது, கடவுள் செயலேயன்றி வேறல்ல. இதற்கு என் ஆர்வமும், என் தகப்பனாரின் ஊக்கமும் வீடாமுயற்சியையும் தவிர வேறொன்றுமில்லை. அனேகமாக இந்தியாவின் எல்லா பாகங்களிலும் கச்சேரிகள் செய்திருக்கிறேன். இன்னும் இவ்விதத்தில் எவ்வளவோ முன்னேற வேண்டியவனாக இருக்கிறேன். அதற்கு ஈஸ்வர கிருபை பொதுஜன ஆதரவு, என் தந்தையின் ஆசீர்வாதம் இம்மூன்றையும் நடிநிற்கின்றன.

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